

# Spotlight

Mayor's Office  
for Senior Citizens

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Human Services  
Department

SUMMER 2005

## **Grande dames, living legends and unsung heroes:** *Seniors who make a difference in Seattle every day*

**By Mayor Greg Nickels**



**Mayor Nickels  
and Vivian  
McLean  
celebrated the  
DNDA  
groundbreaking  
at Historic  
Cooper School.**

When Vivian McLean enters a room, it lights up. Vivian's bright eyes, glowing cheeks, white hair and radiant smile emit a level of energy that defies her age. But those who know Vivian also shine in her presence because we know she always expects the best in us.

Vivian is among my friends who are making a difference in their communities — and have been for decades.

### **Neighborhood leader Vivian McLean**

I've known Vivian for more than 20 years, as a neighborhood organizer, peace activist, environmentalist and educator. She has tutored young children at Cooper School — located near her home in a north Delridge neighborhood called Pigeon Point — for more than 18 years.

Vivian worked for decades to establish a Seattle Public Library branch in the Delridge corridor. The Delridge branch opened last year, appropriately located near 19 units of affordable housing and surrounded by public art. Named Vivian McLean Place, the complex is a lasting testament to her ongoing work to support her community.

Now in her early 80s, Vivian is one of three co-chairs of the Delridge Neighborhoods Development Association (DNDA) capital campaign, "Three Projects, One Community." After raising \$7.3 million, DNDA is developing a new home for the West Seattle Food Bank and other community resources, creating a cultural arts center, and constructing affordable family housing. I know that much of the success of this campaign is due to the grande dames of West Seattle who have led it — Vivian McLean, Margaret Ceis and a younger colleague, Martha Kongsgaard.

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***Margaret Ceis accepted an achievement award from ArtsWest in 2003. Photo courtesy of Julia Fiset.***

## **Civic leader Margaret Ceis**

The DNDA capital campaign is also a natural fit for Margaret Ceis. A true civic leader, Margaret has volunteered her time to develop housing, health, social services, parks, arts and cultural centers in Seattle for more than 40 years.

Margaret served in leadership roles throughout her 70s. She chaired the Harborview Medical Center board of trustees and the Seattle Housing Authority's governance board. She chaired the Seattle Parks and Recreation board during the 2000 Pro Parks levy, which has funded development of new neighborhood parks, green spaces, playfields, trails, boulevards, out-of-school activities for youth, and senior activities throughout Seattle.

Margaret was instrumental in building the ArtsWest Playhouse, a state-of-the-art, 149-seat performance facility that opened in 1999. As West Seattle's home for the arts, ArtsWest promotes music, visual arts, literature, theatre and other art forms for people of all ages.

Development of the ArtsWest Playhouse created a great ripple effect for West Seattle Junction. Today, thanks in large part to Margaret, the entire Junction benefits from the ArtsWest patrons who enjoy the restaurants and stores that surround the playhouse.



***Rev. McKinney was honored as a Living Legend by the Hampton University Ministers last summer.***

## **Civil rights leader Rev. Dr. Samuel B. McKinney**

Reverend Samuel McKinney's experiences and accomplishments could fill a book, and I hope someday they do. Even as a young man, I knew Seattle was home to a great civil and human rights leader.

I knew that Rev. McKinney persuaded Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to make his only trip to Seattle in 1961. More than 40 years later, I still hear about lives that were changed forever by Dr. King's speeches in Seattle.

I knew that Rev. McKinney led Seattle's first major civil rights protest in 1963, demanding a citywide fair-housing ordinance. He marched on Washington with Dr. King in 1963, and from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. He also led a boycott of Seattle schools in 1966 to protest racial segregation.

Under Rev. McKinney's leadership, Mt. Zion Baptist Church grew to more than 3,000 members, the largest church in Seattle. He founded a credit union and a bank, youth programs and a retirement home. He also served as a board director of numerous organizations, including the first Seattle Human Rights Commission.

At age 78, Rev. McKinney has been retired for seven years, but is as active and influential as ever. He serves as pastor emeritus at Mt. Zion and mentors church leaders throughout the country. When the Hampton University Ministers named him a living legend, I thought there was no more fitting a title.

Committed to supporting young people, Rev. McKinney recently founded a baseball program for disadvantaged youth. He speaks out about prostate cancer. He narrates Langston Hughes' Black Nativity during the holidays. Even in retirement, he delivers powerful sermons on the continuing need for social justice.



***Ben and Ruth Woo pose with her Japanese American Citizens League's Unsung Hero Award. Photo courtesy of the Northwest Asian Weekly.***

## **Political leader Ruth Woo**

It's no wonder that Ruth Woo was described by The Seattle Times as a "quintessential behind-the-scenes worker of the Seattle power scene" and the Northwest Asian Weekly as "campaign manager, mentor, cheerleader, strategizer and surrogate mother."

A longtime political consultant and businessperson, Ruth works tirelessly to promote candidates of color for public office. She hasn't slowed down now that she's in her 70s.

She got her start in the office of Gov. Daniel J. Evans and has supported Democrats, Republicans and independent candidates for office who share her politics of inclusion. Since then, Ruth was instrumental in Gov. Gary Locke's election and served on his transition team following the election, as she did for me. She managed County Executive Ron Sims' campaign in 1997. She's also played a significant role in the elections of numerous city councilmembers, judges and state legislators. And even when we don't agree on political issues, I have the utmost respect for her opinion and admiration in her ability to influence and motivate the public.

Ruth won the Japanese American Citizens League's Unsung Hero Award early this year. I sing her praises for the difference she makes in the public policy arena.



***Nancy Malmgren and Bert the Fish hosted Mayor Nickels and County Councilmember Larry Phillips at Carkeek Park.***

## **Environmental leader Nancy Malmgren**

An April 2000 Seattle Times article described Nancy Malmgren as "a bit less nimble than a nymph and more affable than an elf... a creature of the woods and creeks for whom there is no mythical match" — not bad for a then-70 year old.

That year, the Times recognized Nancy with a Jefferson Award for decades of work restoring streams and salmon habitat. She co-founded the Carkeek Watershed Community Action Project, an organization that has restored Pipers

Creek and helped students and other Carkeek Park visitors learn about the importance of urban streams. She was instrumental in developing the Carkeek Park Environmental Learning Center and actively influences development and solid waste policy decisions to protect the stream, salmon habitat and Puget Sound.

An environmental educator and organizer, Nancy helps young children raise and release salmon fry for the creek every year and monitor water quality. She teaches residents upstream and throughout the city how to plant salmon-friendly gardens, reduce runoff and store rainwater.

On Earth Day, May Day, Mother's Day — in fact, many weekends throughout the year — Nancy is organizing. She coordinates volunteers for community cleanups, trail and habitat restoration parties, environmental fairs and community celebrations. She stencils storm drains and leads hikes and park and orchard tours.

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Always on the move, and five years after her Jefferson Award, Nancy continues to make a difference in environmental quality in Seattle.

## **Making a difference in our quality of life**

Late this spring, the U.S. Conference of Mayors named Seattle the country's Most Livable City for 2005. Seattle was recognized because of my efforts to curb greenhouse gases. But I recognize that the quality of life we enjoy in Seattle is also due to the work of citizen leaders like Vivian McLean, Margaret Ceis, Sam McKinney, Ruth Woo and Nancy Malmgren. Today, in their 70s and 80s, they continue to make a daily difference for all of us.



## **Share your time, talent and skills**

*by Patti-lyn Bell, Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens*

Boomers and seniors who volunteer with church, youth, local government, retirement or nursing centers continue to learn and grow by sharing their time and skills in their neighborhoods.

Community organizations have various volunteer opportunities. Your hobby or talent might be of interest to a neighborhood organization. Call or drop by to see what they do. Good starting points to explore are local libraries, community centers and nonprofit organizations.

The Seattle Times and Seattle Post-Intelligencer often give you glimpses of available volunteer opportunities through a listing under seniors and through human interest stories about specific organizations.

You can also find a wealth of volunteer opportunities on the Internet. Three sites to consider are:

- City of Seattle Volunteer Opportunities: [www.seattle.gov/html/CITIZEN/volunteer.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/html/CITIZEN/volunteer.htm)
- Volunteer Match: [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)
- Senior Corps: [www.seniorcorps.org](http://www.seniorcorps.org)

You can also call the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens to learn about volunteer

opportunities. We match seniors with organizations and projects that interest them. We match younger adults, families and groups of volunteers with organizations and projects that support seniors.

Computer-savvy seniors can volunteer to teach Seniors Training Seniors in Computer Basics classes offered by the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens. Instructors enjoy introducing their peers to the Internet and e-mail.

"I was looking for a challenge and something that would help me grow," said Bill Bumpas, a retired IBM executive. "Since I enjoy computers and the Internet, this seemed the best match for me. I learned as much from the students as they did from me!"

"Interacting with my peers while showing them how much information is available to them is fun," explained Al Carlin, a retired University of Washington faculty member. "This is my first volunteer venture after retirement. If you keep on learning new tricks, you'll never be an old dog."

No matter who you are, your skills or your talent, volunteering is the answer. For more information about volunteering, call the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens at (206) 684-0639.

# Civic involvement enriches the lives of older adults

by Teresa Moore,  
Healthy Aging Partnership



*Aging and  
Disability  
Services director  
Pamela Piering  
talks with seniors  
about civic  
involvement.*

More than 100 older adults, many of them non-English speaking, took the first step toward civic engagement on April 28 when they attended a free HAP-sponsored workshop in Seattle.

After a primer in effective activism by King County Executive Ron Sims and others, participants wrote down how they planned to make a difference in their own communities.

One's own neighborhood is a good place to start, aging advocates say. Pick an issue that interests you and read up on it. Get on the mailing list of a group dedicated to the effort, be it affordable health care or yard-waste composting.

Not only will you help your community, you will help yourself. Civic involvement can ward off depression by giving older adults a sense of purpose in their retirement.

Here are a few tips from HAP for those who want to do more than vote:

- After you find a cause that interests you, attend a public meeting, sit on a board or committee or volunteer to help.
- Write, call or visit your local elected officials. Tell them clearly and concisely how the pending decision will affect you.
- Join. There is strength in numbers, and joining a group can be less intimidating than striking out on your own. It is also a wonderful way to make friends.

For more information about civic involvement opportunities and other issues, call HAP's free and confidential help line at 1-888-4-ELDERS (1-888-435-3377), go to [www.4elders.org](http://www.4elders.org) on the Web or send e-mail to [hap@seniorservices.org](mailto:hap@seniorservices.org).

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# Hoarding presents risk to health and safety

by Cynthia Ellison, Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens



"I love cats! I have 30 of them. They're so precious, I can't live without them. They're my family." Fact: This Seattle older adult had 30 cats in her home. Half of them were dead.

"I have tons of books, magazines, newspapers and sweepstakes mail. They say that all this paper could be dangerous but, you know, I may need this information someday." Fact: According to case managers, these residences turn into path houses — pathways to the bed, to the kitchen, even to the toilet. This creates a fire hazard for both the hoarder and the neighbors.

When a person hoards, a massive quantity of possessions accumulates, both sanitary and unsanitary, leading to unsafe, unhealthy living environments inside and outside of their home. Hoarded items may be junk or trash, or very expensive. No matter their original values, hoarded possessions can breed filth and vermin, and create health and fire hazards.

Hoarding usually starts in early adulthood. Some of the reasons:

1. Dementia makes a person become forgetful and planning and follow-through difficult.
2. Depression limits energy and decreases interest in some activities.
3. Attention deficit disorder makes it difficult to sustain or complete tasks.
4. Psychosis (e.g., schizophrenia, delusions) interferes with normal living.
5. Obsessive-compulsive disorder causes significant anxiety and distress from persistent thoughts.
6. Isolation leads to poor self-care and empty lives.

Hoarders do not see a problem with the clutter around them but it can be a safety and health risk to the hoarder and the community.

Unsafe hoarding cases exist throughout Seattle. An elderly Green Lake couple stacked papers everywhere and left spoiled food molding in the refrigerator and dirty dishes overflowed in the sink. This unsanitary condition caused cockroach and rat infestation throughout the home. Rodent bites were found in an oxygen tube. Dead roaches were found in the refrigerator.

Some homes are so full that stoves and toilets are inaccessible or unusable. One resident whose house was filled from top to bottom could only enter and exit through a window. In cases like these, repair people are unable to come in homes to make repairs.

These habits may lead to death. Firefighters were unable to save a lower Queen Anne resident who dropped a cigarette on the papers and plastic bags that carpeted her condominium.

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Hoarders avoid showing others their collections and do not allow people to touch their belongings. When asked to discard their “treasures,” they become upset, since they have an emotional attachment to these possessions.

“Hoarding cases now represent about one-fifth of the 350 cases handled each year by the Geriatric Regional Assessment Team, a crisis intervention service in King County for residents 60 and older,” said Karen Kent, the program’s clinical supervisor. “Sometimes the best we can do for hoarders is to make their homes safe.”

If you know someone who hoards or need help with hoarding behavior in your own home, the following agencies can help:

- Senior Services of Seattle/King County: 1-800-4-ELDERS
- Seattle King County Public Health: (206) 205-4394
- Seattle Department of Planning and Development: (206) 684-7899
- Adult Protective Services: (206) 341-7660
- Geriatric Crisis Services: (206) 923-6300
- Animal Control (local office)
- Fire Department (local fire station)

## **How to decrease your collections**

1. Surround yourself with things you use or love.
2. Get rid of an old item each time you bring a new item home.
3. Plan a reward for a week of little collecting.
4. Recycle, donate or sell as often as you can.
5. Change collecting thoughts to positive thoughts.
6. Ask someone to support you in keeping the space clean.
7. Keep boxes or bags marked: donations, sell, recycle and fill them often.
8. Take photographs of items that are hard to let go, then let go.
9. Remind yourself to relax — breathe deeply, slowly stretch your neck and shoulders, take walks, listen to music.
10. Have a weekly clean-up time when you look critically at your space and make needed changes.
11. Invite people over to enjoy your clean space.
12. Use your sense of humor.

# Protect yourself against West Nile infection



*Dump out containers that collect standing water.*

You have probably heard about West Nile infection, caused by a virus typically borne by mosquitoes. You may have wondered whether you are at risk, especially during mosquito season.

While the overall risk of West Nile infection is low, health officials and city agencies are on alert. There were confirmed animal cases of West Nile virus in our state in 2002. Washington is the only remaining state in the “Lower 48” without a human case as of last year. Public health officials say there is a good chance our state will see a human case this summer or fall.

According to Public Health—Seattle & King County, most people with West Nile virus infection don’t get sick, but 20 percent of people bitten by an infected mosquito experience mild to severe flu-like symptoms. And while less than one percent of those who experience symptoms

develop a life-threatening illness, even milder diseases could cause long-term disability such as weakness or paralysis. People over age 50 and especially people over age 70 are at most risk of developing serious illness.

The best way to reduce the risk of West Nile virus infection is to reduce mosquito-breeding habitats, use chemical deterrents and cover your skin. Mosquitoes can breed in even small amounts of water left standing for more than seven days. Birdbaths, old tires, clogged gutters, buckets, wheelbarrows and children’s toys can all collect standing water.

The prime mosquito biting periods are often at dusk and dawn. When you are outside and mosquitoes are biting, wear long sleeved shirts and long pants. Hats are also useful and if you choose to do so, you may consider wearing insect repellent. Repellents containing the chemical DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) are known to be safe and effective. Some people are sensitive to DEET and may want to use an alternative product.

This year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend two new repellants containing picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. For more information, go to [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/RepellentUpdates.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/RepellentUpdates.htm) on the Web.

Birds, especially crows, are especially susceptible to West Nile infection and signal an increase in the virus. Public Health asks that you call (206) 205-4394 to report recently dead birds. For general questions about the virus, call Public Health’s West Nile virus hotline at (206) 205-3883.

## Mosquito bite prevention

- Keep window screens and doors “bug tight”
- Avoid the outdoors during dawn and dusk
- Wear long sleeves, long pants and a hat
- If you choose, use mosquito repellent
- Repair window screens
- Eliminate standing water where possible

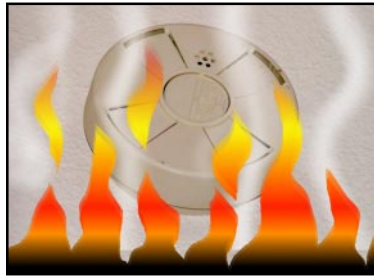
## Symptoms of West Nile infection

Most people who infected with West Nile virus have no symptoms at all. However, about 20% of people infected with the virus will suffer from flu-like symptoms — fever, nausea, vomiting, headache, and fatigue — lasting three to six days.

Persons who become ill develop symptoms 3 to 14 days after infection. The virus remains in infected individuals for a relatively short time and does not cause chronic infections.

If you have flu-like symptoms, you should seek immediate medical care.

## Let the Seattle Fire Department alarm you!



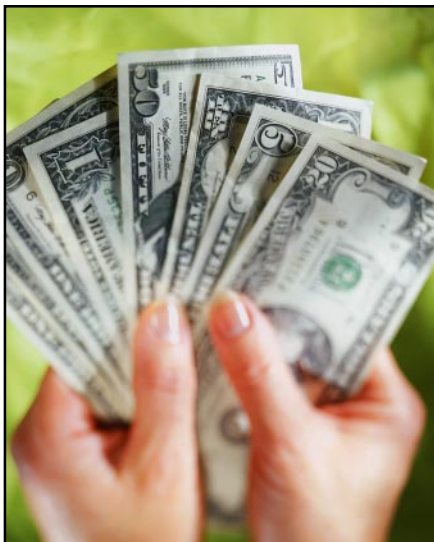
The facts are alarming! Senior citizens are three to four times more likely to die in a home fire than the rest of the population. And, although smoke alarms exist in 92% of American homes, nearly one-third do not work because of worn or missing batteries.

The Seattle Fire Department wants to remind senior citizens that working smoke alarms will provide the necessary warning and the time needed to escape from your home in the event there is a fire. Smoke alarms have one function — to wake people up in the event of a fire during the night. A working smoke alarm can cut your risk of dying in a home fire by as much as half.

You can ensure your smoke alarms will work when you need them if you follow these steps:

1. Install smoke alarms near all sleeping areas in the home.
2. Check your smoke alarms on a regular basis to make certain they still work.
3. Change your smoke alarm's batteries once a year.

If you live in Seattle, own your home and are senior, disabled or live on a low income, the Seattle Fire Department can provide and install working smoke alarms in your home. For more information about this free program, call the Seattle Fire Department at (206) 386-1337 or go to [www.seattle.gov/fire/pubEd/smokealarms/smokeAlarms.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/fire/pubEd/smokealarms/smokeAlarms.htm) on the Web.



## Seniors can live frugally in Seattle

by **Barrie R. Jackson**

Let's face it — Seattle is an expensive city for many seniors. I want to continue living here, so I cut unnecessary expenses. I'll share with you how I did it.

I live in downtown senior housing. Who needs a car? I gave my Volvo to my daughter. Now I save about \$1,750 every year — no more car insurance, gasoline cost, emission tests and license, parking and maintenance fees.

I use my senior bus pass and taxi script — or I walk, which is good for my health — to save on transportation. In a pinch, my friend has a car. My other travel options include biking, using a Flex car

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 10**

and taking advantage of senior discounts on trains, planes, ferries and the Monorail.

Food can be expensive, especially when eating out. I use restaurant discount coupons and I'm always on the lookout for wonderful inexpensive places like the New Orleans Restaurant in Pioneer Square or Mama's Mexican Café in Belltown.

I also save money by eating in. I shop for bulk items at Costco, split the cost with a friend, then re-bag, re-bottle, re-wrap and freeze. Trader Joe's stores offer fair prices on many items in the store, including single portion health products. I use coupons or buy sale items at Safeway, QFC and Fred Meyer. Around holidays, when there are lots of grocery specials, I stock up.

I love the International District. Asian markets on Jackson Street have the best deals for fresh fruits, soul food, vegetables, seafoods (fresh, dried or frozen), green teas, Shiitake mushrooms and oodles of noodles. If you're looking for good chicory coffee, try the French Market. For Lebanese yogurt, pita bread, curries and Indian/Pakistani delights, The Souk is the place to go. The Mexican Market next door is also priced right — try their take-home frozen tamales.

Big John's Pacific Imported Foods is primo! If you like Mediterranean food, you'll like the rich smells and big savings there. You can buy bulk rice, beans, lentils, spices and herbs out of barrels and browse the aisles for olive oils, vinegars and imported tin goods. There are display cases of cheeses, olives and cured meats, and the imported Italian and Greek pastas are available packaged or frozen. I've found low prices for dates, apricots, prunes, nuts, dried berries there, too. Be sure to taste the samples.

Other big costs are prescription drugs not covered by Medicare or insurance co-pays. If possible, ask for generic prescription drugs. Costco seems to have the best buys. Other non-prescription drugs can be purchased by using discount coupons at Bartell's, Walgreen's and Rite Aid.

For low clothing prices, shop value stores, yard sales and some consignment shops. Buy new clothing at closeout prices or buy sales items at Old Navy, The Gap, Target and Nordstrom Rack. There are reasonable prices on the Internet, too.

I only pay around \$60 a year on long-distance telephone service. I compare cell phones companies for the best prices. I also get good deals with my local telephone company. And I buy long-distance calling cards at drugstores or grocery stores.

For entertainment and culture, how can you beat Seattle Public Library for books, CDs, VHS, DVDs and special events? Seattle movie theaters provide senior discounts. Check online and local newspapers for free gallery tours and book readings. Also, the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens often has complimentary tickets to arts and cultural events.

The Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens also provides easy access to services to seniors, utility discounts and utility payment assistance for low-income households, regardless of age. The Utility Assistance Program can help eligible homeowners and renters with discounts on Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities combined utilities bills. Applicants must meet income guidelines and their utility bill must be in their own name. Applicants living in subsidized housing (Section 8, Seattle Housing Authority, King County Housing Authority, HUD, Shelter+Plus Care, etc.) are not eligible for utility assistance, with the exception of those who live in SHA bond housing.

Senior Information and Assistance is available at the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens. Professional senior advocates can assist you with free referrals to services such as housing, health care, transportation, nutrition, senior rights, long-term care, Chore services, activities and case management. Through a referral from the advocates, I received free advice about my will.

Adults 60 and older are eligible for the Gold Card for Healthy Aging, a senior identification card that provides access to services. The FLASH Card is a similar card for adults with disabilities. Individuals who have these cards are eligible for discounts from businesses and organizations listed in a Special Discount Directory.

For more information about City programs and services for seniors, call the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens at (206) 684-0500 or go to [www.seattle.gov/humanservices/mosc/](http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/mosc/) on the Web.

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# Healthy eating for healthy aging—what's the bottom line?

by Kim Storms, M.P.H., R.D. Senior Services of Seattle/King County



As a member of the 55+ age group in a few months, it is important for me to eat healthy. Studies show that, as we age, a healthy lifestyle that includes healthy eating and physical activity reduces the risk for disability. We have also learned it is never too late to make healthy lifestyle changes. My focus for this article is to share with you some food choices you can make for healthier eating and healthier aging.

**PROTEIN CHOICES:** Because our body cannot store it, protein must be eaten each day. Red meat is a great source of protein but it provides a lot of saturated fat and cholesterol.

Research shows some of the healthiest populations do not eat red meat more than three times a month. My advice is to get more of your daily protein from healthier sources — fish, chicken, turkey, tofu and beans. Research shows eating fish twice a week reduces your risk for heart disease. Some good fish choices include mackerel, trout, herring, sardines, albacore tuna and salmon.

**FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CHOICES:** Eating more fruits and vegetables is better when it comes to preventing chronic disease. Work towards the current recommendation of eating seven to nine servings daily. Think Color and Variety when choosing your fruits and vegetables. Aim for three or more colors at each meal. Take advantage of our locally grown fruits and vegetables this time of year. When fresh fruits and vegetables are not available or affordable, frozen or canned products are still good options for the benefits these foods provide.

**FAT AND OIL CHOICES:** Think mono-saturated fats such as canola and olive oils when you need fat or oil for cooking as these are best for your heart. Be aware that olive oil has a low smoke point and tastes best if used for light sautéing, low-heat baking, sauces and salads. Watch out for trans-fats. These may be worse for your heart than saturated fats. If the label on the package lists “partially hydrogenated fat or oil,” it contains trans-fats that should be avoided. By January 2006, all food labels must list trans-fats. Be aware that most fast food restaurants use trans-fats for deep fat frying many of their foods.

**THIRTY MINUTES EACH DAY:** Physical activity goes hand in hand with healthy eating and healthy aging. Current guidelines recommend at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day to reduce the risk for chronic disease. If this is too much at one time, break up the physical activity into two 15-minute sessions.

For more information on senior nutrition, ask your health care provider. Your provider may wish to refer you to a Registered Dietician for one-on-one nutrition guidance. In addition, you can find credible and reliable information about senior nutrition on the Web at these sites:

- USDA Pyramid: <http://MyPyramid.gov/>
- Nutrition for Older Adults Health: [www.arches.uga.edu/~noahnet/](http://www.arches.uga.edu/~noahnet/)
- NIH Senior Health: <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/>

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# Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens provides information and assistance

*By Irene Stewart, Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens*

Senior Information and Assistance Advocates at the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens know how to help people in need. They can answer questions about aging issues and assist elderly clients or their family members with multiple needs.

On any given day, our receptionists refer 10 to 50 callers and one to four walk-in clients to a Senior Advocate for free, confidential assistance and easy, one-stop access to community resources. Here are some examples:

- Ms. J., 79 years old, requested information about the Medicare Savings Card. A Senior Advocate determined she was eligible for the \$600 Medicare Prescription Credit and helped her complete and submit the application. When the Advocate called to confirm the card was received, Ms. J. said that Medicare had denied her application. The Advocate contacted Medicare on Ms. J's behalf. Medicare determined that the denial was in error and enrolled Ms. J. in the program.
- Mr. and Mrs. W., ages 68 and 66, respectively, got by on \$36,000 annual income until they gained custody of several grandchildren, including one with special needs. A Senior Advocate connected them with Help for Working Families, which provided utility and childcare assistance, as well as information about health and education benefits for the children and grandparent support programs for themselves.

Seniors and their family members needs vary considerably. Some need help determining housing or transportation options. Others need help with utility payments. Some need referrals to a podiatrist, money for new eyeglasses, or information about living wills. Others need help working out a problem with an agency. Senior Advocates provide information to help make elders' lives a little easier.

Senior Information and Assistance Advocates are dedicated to helping people and they have a wealth of personal and professional experience. They also have access to an extensive list of community resources in the Senior Services of Seattle/King County database.

The Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens promotes healthy aging, independent living and social and civic engagement for older adults. The office is located at 618 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Room 250 (2<sup>nd</sup> & Cherry in downtown Seattle).

For more information, call 206-684-0500 (TTY 206-233-2778) or go to [www.seattle.gov/humanservices/mosc/](http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/mosc/) on the Web.



## **BenefitsCheckUp: Can you take advantage of additional benefits?**

Senior Advocates in the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens can help you determine whether you qualify for additional benefits by using an exciting new software tool called BenefitsCheckUp.

BenefitsCheckUp assists in determining whether you or a loved one qualifies for federal, state and local, public and private, benefits. The program is free, confidential and anonymous. Your participation could result in lower property taxes, heating bills, housing costs and the best combination of programs to lower the cost of your medicines.

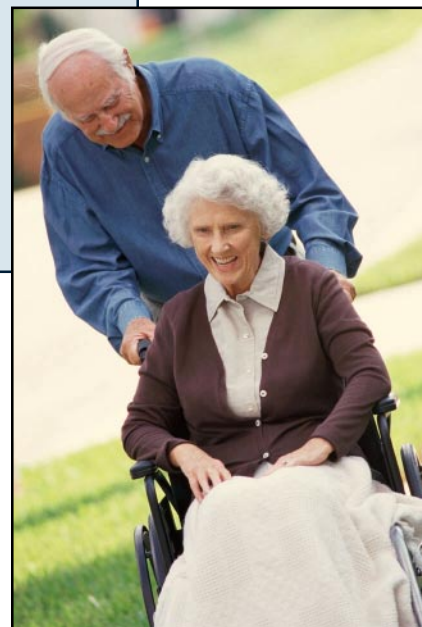
BenefitsCheckUp produces a personal customized report detailing your potential eligibility for free and reduced price programs and services. The report summarizes each program and provides local contact information on where to apply as well as some of the application forms. It also provides local contact numbers for agencies providing benefits.

If you have Internet access, you can complete the CheckUp yourself by going to [www.BenefitsCheckUp.org](http://www.BenefitsCheckUp.org) on the Web. You could ask a relative or trusted friend to help you instead, or you can call the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens and ask a senior advocate to help you.

You will not be asked for your Social Security number. You will be asked about age, type of residence, employment history, whether or not you served in the military, if you have a disability, your monthly income, estimate of monthly expenses, and names of prescription medications you take.

Whether you talk with a Senior Advocate or use BenefitsCheckUp yourself, it should take about 15 minutes to answer the questions.

For more information, call a senior advocate in the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens at (206) 684-0500.



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# Special Events

## Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens Information Meetings

Come to a free presentation about the programs and services offered by the Seattle Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens, including senior information and assistance, utility rate discounts, utility payment assistance, senior employment services, and volunteer programs.

Time: **Thursday, July 14, at 11:00 a.m.**

Place: Jefferson Community Center, 3801 Beacon Ave S

Time: **Wednesday, August 10, at 1:00 p.m.**

Place: Rainier Beach Community Center, 4600 38th Ave S

Info: Call the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens at (206) 684-0500.

## Senior Day at the Bank of America Center

**Sunday, September 18**

Adults 65 and over are invited to enjoy the spectacular view from the observation deck of the Bank of America Center (formerly the Columbia Seafirst Tower). This opportunity is available weekdays for a nominal fee, but seniors can enjoy this special opportunity for free.

Pre-registration is not required. The deck is wheelchair accessible.

Time: 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Place: Bank of America Center, 701 5th Avenue (5th & Columbia)

Info: Call (206) 684-0500.

## Mature Worker's Alliance Hire Experience: Age 50+ Job Fair

**Wednesday, September 14**

Workers over 50 seeking to freshen up job-hunting skills, spruce up résumés and learn where to find jobs are invited to a free resource fair sponsored by the Mature Workers Alliance. Workshops include starting a business, reinventing oneself, job-hunting strategies, using computers and the Internet to find jobs, and managing a second career.

Time: 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Place: Seattle Center House, 305 Harrison Street

Info: Call the Age 55+ Employment Resource Center at (206) 684-0500, send e-mail to [info@matureworkersalliance.org](mailto:info@matureworkersalliance.org) or go to [www.matureworkersalliance.org](http://www.matureworkersalliance.org) on the Web.

## End of Summer Picnic/Potluck

**Friday, September 16**

Seattle Parks and Recreation Senior Adult Program invites you to meet other seniors and program staff at their annual old-fashioned summer sling. The picnic shelter is by the beach, where you can enjoy sun, conversation and a leisurely stroll. Please bring a potluck dish to share. (Note: If weather is bad, the event is cancelled.)

Time: 12:00–2:30 p.m.

Place: Lincoln Park, Shelter #3 (by the water)  
8011 Fauntleroy Way SW, in West Seattle

Info: Call (206) 684-4951 (registration begins August 15 at 8:00 a.m.)

## Senior Halloween Dance

**Monday, October 31**

The Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens, Seattle Parks and Recreation Senior Adult Program and Seattle Center Productions invite you to attend the annual Halloween Dance. Seniors are encouraged to wear a costume or mask. Prizes will be awarded. Admission is free, and food bank donations are suggested.

Time: 1–3 p.m.

Place: Seattle Center House,  
305 Harrison Street

Info: Call (206) 684-0500.

## Senior Holiday Ball

**Monday, December 5**

Seniors from throughout Seattle and King County are invited to enjoy the big band sound of a local ensemble. Admission is free.

Time: 1–4 p.m.

Place: Seattle Center House,  
305 Harrison Street

Info: Call (206) 684-0500.

## Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens 30th Anniversary Celebration & Holiday Open House

**Wednesday, December 8**

Mayor Greg Nickels and the staff at the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens invite you to a 30th anniversary party, in conjunction with the annual holiday open house. Celebrate the season and learn more about services available to older adults and adults with disabilities. Light refreshments will be served. Limited seating is available; please call (206) 684-0500 for reservations.

## SURVEY

### What would **YOU** like to read in upcoming issues of **Spotlight**?

Please help us serve you better by telling us what issues interest you:

☐

Adult Day Services

☐

Assisted Living

☐

Assistive Technology

☐

Baby Boomer Issues

☐

Civic Engagement & Volunteerism

☐

Computers & Information  
Technology

☐

Consumer Information & Access  
to Benefits

☐

Cultural and Ethnic Diversity

☐

Disability and Rehabilitation

☐

Education for Older Adults

☐

Elder Abuse and Neglect

☐

Employment and Workforce Issues

☐

End-of-Life Issues

☐

Family and Caregiving Issues

☐

Financial Planning

☐

Grandparenting

☐

Healthcare — Mental health

☐

Healthcare — Physical health

☐

Health Promotion and Wellness

☐

Housing and Aging in Place

☐

Humanities, Arts and Creativity

☐

International Issues

☐

Legal and Ethical Issues

*continued on back page*

**SURVEY CONTINUED**

**What would YOU like to read in upcoming issues of Spotlight?**

- ☐ Leisure and Recreation
- ☐ Long-Term Care
- ☐ Marketing and Communications
- ☐ Public Policy and Advocacy
- ☐ Religion and Spirituality
- ☐ Retirement
- ☐ Senior Centers
- ☐ Sexuality, Relationships and Intimacy
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to:

Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens  
618 Second Avenue, Room 250  
Seattle, WA 98104

## Spotlight

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The Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens, part of Seattle/King County Aging and Disability Services and the Seattle Human Services Department, complies with all federal, state, and local laws prohibiting discrimination.

Accommodations for persons with disabilities will be provided upon request.

**Irene Stewart, Director**  
**Cynthia Ellison, Editor**

Phone (206) 684-0500

Fax: (206) 684-0494

Email:

[cynthia.ellison@seattle.gov](mailto:cynthia.ellison@seattle.gov)

Web: [www.seattle.gov/humanservices/mosc/](http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/mosc/)

**Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens**

618 2nd Ave Suite 250  
Seattle, WA 98104

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Read the latest edition of **Spotlight**, the Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens' newsletter. In this issue:

**SENIORS MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

Grande dames, living legends and unsung heroes  
Civic involvement enriches the lives of older adults

Also...

Hoarding presents risk to health and safety

Protect yourself against West Nile infection

Living frugally in Seattle

Healthy eating for healthy aging

Senior I&A, BenefitsCheckUp can benefit you!